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COMPARATIVE NATIONAL ELECTIONS PROJECT



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The Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) is a multi-year, multi-country examination of citizen voting behavior and attitudes in democracies around the world. In addition to including the conventional factors in explaining voting decisions, it has pioneered a focus on how voters receive information about policies, parties, and candidates during election campaigns.

CNEP began in 1990 with surveys in the first national elections of the 1990s in Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan. It expanded in 1993 to include eight more countries and additional questions. CNEP recently expanded again so that it now includes 28 datasets from 20 countries supplemented by several non-project datasets. These data have been incorporated into a single merged file in which several hundred core items have been rigorously standardized.

CNEP is the second-largest international project of its kind. What sets CNEP apart from other cross-national election studies, however, is its systematic comparative analysis of data in a theoretically and thematically unified publication.

The first edited volume from the project was published by Oxford University Press in 2007. Last year, project leaders met at the Wallenberg Research Centre of Stellenbosch University in South Africa to finalize chapters for the next edited volume, which adds new Asian and African countries and a focus on values.

Among its topics are:

- The role of mass media, discussion networks, secondary associations, and political parties as the four principal channels of



political communication in democracies.

- The impact of sociopolitical values on electoral behavior.
- Voting determinants, including long-term factors such as social cleavages, value conflicts and partisanship, and short-term factors such as the state of the economy and candidate attributes.
- Determinants of voting turnout, including the impacts of individual characteristics, country electoral laws, and political communication.
- A detailed case study of attitude formation and political behavior across four decades in Spain, based on a panel study and in-depth interviews.

Project leaders are also planning the fourth phase of CNEP, which will integrate new survey data from Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Portugal, South Africa, and the United States. New additions to the project include Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, and efforts are underway to gain funding to support future surveys in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa.

So far CNEP has produced more than 100 chapters and articles and one edited book. All the datasets are also posted on the project website at www.cnep.ics.ul.pt

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